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ABSTRACT

This report, one of a series on the work of the 30 pilot projects that formed the European Community's second program on the transition from education to adult and community life, is an interim progress statement on how the projects have developed new approaches to engaging parents' support of education. It highlights key points from the pilot projects as to what parents and parents' associations should do and what schools and local authorities should do to make the partnership between them more effective. Section I discusses roles for parents and parents' associations as partners with schools. Section II describes the role of schools in making parents more active partners. Section III describes how parents can be invited, encouraged, or helped to contribute to the life and work of secondary schools in the double role as parents of children in the school and as members of the local community. The last section summarizes the points on which action can be initiated by parents or parents' associations and by schools. It also draws the implications for supporting action by local authorities responsible for education. An appendix provides an annotated list of 39 titles from "Innovations," a series of four-page profiles of new developments on curriculum, guidance, aspects of cooperation, provision for the disadvantaged, teacher training, and the improvement of opportunities for girls. A list of contacts for all pilot projects referred to in the text is also appended. (YLB)

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EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

ACTION PROGRAMME

TRANSITION OF
YOUNG PEOPLE
FROM EDUCATION
TO ADULT AND WORKING LIFE

Working Document

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PARTNERSHIP – PARENTS AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Preface

This report is one in a series on the work of the 30 pilot projects which formed the European Community's second Programme on the Transition from education to adult and working life.

Most of the reports relate to one of the working themes adopted for the Programme: the development and use of work experience schemes in secondary education; equal opportunities for girls and young women; guidance and youth information; staff development; assessment and certification; integration of young migrants; education for enterprise; schools and the disadvantaged; curriculum development; and cooperation and partnership in a local/regional context. Each project worked in one or more of these areas from 1983 to 1987.

The programme was based on a Resolution agreed by the Council and Ministers of Education in July 1982, which called for action to assist Member States to develop their policies for young people between 14 and 18 years of age. Its 30 pilot projects were widely spread across Europe, each of them designated by the national authorities, in consultation with the Commission, which also met half of the operating costs. Hundreds of schools, vocational training institutes and other institutions in these 30 areas of Europe took part.

In 1983, the Commission invited IFAPLAN, a social research institute with its main base in Cologne, to:

- organise contact and the exchange of ideas and staff between projects through inter-project visits and workshops;
- prepare reports on the work of the projects, analysed according to the themes, or policy fields, of the Programme.

A list of publications can be obtained from the IFAPLAN Information Office in Brussels (address on the cover of this report).

About this report

The value of cooperation between school and parents is a recurring theme in the literature of research on the effectiveness of education and the annals of educational policy. Parents are usually enjoined to be more active in support of the teachers' work on behalf of their children. More rarely, though more often recently, are they supposed to have a broader role to play.

Educators' willingness to discuss the theme of school-home relations is not, unfortunately, matched by a similar wealth of practical experience or experimentation in the schools themselves. By and large, primary schools have led the way. Secondary schools are several leagues behind.

In the second European Action Programme on Transition, although cooperation with parents was not included in the list of priority themes on which the pilot projects should work, a number of pilot projects developed new approaches to engaging parents' support as part of their work in broader fields such as the development of new courses, the improvement of guidance and counselling, the establishment of schemes of work experience, or the involvement of adults other than teachers in the teaching/learning process. In the same period (1985) the European Parents Association was formed, with the support of the Commission of the European Communities, in recognition of the importance of parents in the educational process. It brings together representatives of national/regional parents' associations in the 12 Member countries of the Community.

The present paper is, in this context, an interim progress statement. It sums up, and puts into usable form, the key points which emerge from the pilot projects, which demonstrate what parents and parents' associations on the one hand, and schools and local authorities on the other, should do, according to the experience of the pilot projects, to make the partnership between them more effective. It is based on

experience, not theory. It particularly relates to the role of secondary schools, and to the part played by parents while their children are in secondary school and especially as they near the end of the period of compulsory schooling.

It is hoped that the experience briefly described here, and the implications for action on the part of parents' associations, schools and local authorities, will be of value in advancing practice in this field.

Note : "Parents Associations" is used in this paper to mean the school-level grouping of parents, or parents body, however it may be constituted or designated.

I - Roles for parents and parents associations

The role of parents as partners with schools can be divided into a number of aspects :

- their role in support of their own children and of what the school provides for their children - discussed in this part of the paper;

- their role as a potential resource for different kinds of learning, especially those which involve adults other than teachers in the learning/teaching process. This is dealt with in Part III.

- their role in the management of the school - on which see, briefly, below.

A fourth might be included - the parents' role as educators in their home. This is not covered in this paper although it needs to be recognised that the schools are minor partners in the education of children, and that parents are the major ones. Various ways in which this needs to be reflected in the partnership between the two, school and parents, are touched on but the reader who wants to explore this more fully, should consult a recent study of practice and theory, across the countries of the European community, now published in all the Community languages, on behalf of the European Commission.*

The same study should be consulted on parents' roles in school management. That, too, is not covered here, except indirectly, for two reasons. First, because the pilot projects, in the Transition Programme, were generally not in a position to experiment on that aspect or develop new ideas about it. And, secondly, because the legal and administrative arrangements for parents to participate in school management at the secondary school level vary so greatly between the school sys-

* "The child between" by A. Macbeth et al, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, July 1981.

tems of the 12 countries of the European Community that a separate study would be needed to cover it. However, the inclusion of parents' roles in school management is obviously of great potential importance for creating a climate, and opportunities, for their active involvement in other kinds of cooperation and support of the school. With that in mind, and without suggesting that the Danish practice is necessarily applicable everywhere, a thumb-nail sketch of the practice in Denmark is given in Box 1, which shows how far parents are included in school management in one Community country.

Parents and school management — Box 1

In Denmark, parents are closely involved with the management and organization of the "Folkeskole" (compulsory school, usually for children aged 6-16/17)

The governing board of each school must include five to seven parents elected every fourth year, plus the head-teacher, two teachers, two students, and one nominee appointed by the city council.

Only parents have the right to vote in the board, and they are responsible for certain key decisions : on the choice of text books, the duration of school hours, regulations concerning discipline, and the grouping of pupils into streamed or mixed-ability grouping. They also approve the time-table, and the distribution of teaching hours between the teachers.

They exercise an important influence on the content of the subjects of the curriculum, and the time to be allocated to them; the range of optional subjects to be offered in the school; the procedures by which children choose between the options; and the procedures to be used by the school for consultation with parents about children's career choices.

In 1987, guidelines were issued by the Ministry of Education for the governing board in future also to be responsible for the total budget of the school except teachers' salaries.

Parents are obliged, by law, to maintain contact with the school about the progress of their child. If this is not done, the class-teacher must, if necessary, visit the parents at home. This contact is reinforced, on the school's side, by the practice of allowing the same class-teacher to follow a class, year by year through their progress in the Folkeskole, thereby providing stable adult contact for each child in the setting of the school.

Parents' support for their children

In secondary schools, parents' support is needed, first, to give their children general encouragement as they progress through school; and, second, so that the parents, who are a key influence on the child's choice of career, can play an informed part in helping him or her reach a decision, in the final stages of secondary education, about what to do next, whether it be more education, vocational training, or to find a job.

The successful performance of these roles depends on parents being prepared to spend some time finding out about what the school is trying to achieve for their child, and about the careers and training opportunities which are open to her or him.

The implications of this, for the individual parent, are simple enough to set out (see Box 2).

Basics for parents — Box 2

Parental support for their children at school means, basically :

- talking to their child about what she/he is doing at school;
- reading the information the school provides;
- visiting the school to consult teachers individually;
- attending formal or informal school occasions organized to explain the school's activities and display work done by the pupils.

But, in practice, despite the natural goodwill and interest shown by most parents for their children's success at school, the partnership between parent and teacher at the secondary stage is not easy, or generally successful. For the most part, the initiative to improve this lies with the school, or the education authorities, and a number of suggestions about what they should do on their side to make things easier, and make the relationship more fruitful are set out in Parts II and III. But, for the help of individual parents and, more especially, parents' associations, some indications are given below about

trends in the character of secondary education, particularly in the final two or three years of secondary school, i.e. what is often referred to as the "transition years" - if only to alert them to the need, to find out more about what their school, or schools, are doing in this field in these new directions.

Changes in secondary education

Since 1975, the economic situation and the growth of unemployment have persuaded many countries to introduce into secondary education a stronger element of preparation of young people for the transition from school to the adult and working world. Sometimes this has meant the introduction of a new "subject" into the curriculum, or the adaptation of existing ones. In Germany, for instance, 'Arbeitslehre' (Introduction to the world of work) is now very common, in the curriculum for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16*. Elsewhere, special projects such as the French 'Projets d'actions éducatives' (PAE), have have been introduced for the same purpose, into the secondary schools. Or, as in Ireland and the United Kingdom, cross-subject courses may be offered in addition to the normal subjects, or partly instead of them.

Examples of new "transition" courses, and course elements — Box 3

Courses developed to meet the "transition" needs of young people, i.e. to prepare them with knowledge and understanding of the adult and working world in the last two or three years of compulsory schooling, can be found summarised in brief four-page leaflets in the European "Innovations" series, as follows :

Work Experience Integrated in the Curriculum, Ireland	(Nr. 3)
Social & Vocational Skills Course, Strathclyde	(Nr. 21)
Guidance Course - The Netherlands	(Nr. 26)
Curriculum coordinators - Manchester	(Nr. 27)
'Arbeitslehre' - Germany	(Nr. 38)

For the full list of Innovations, see Annex 1.

* See Innovations 38, 'Arbeitslehre' - Germany, referred to in Annex 1

Most of these initiatives have one or more of the following objectives :

- promoting understanding of the adult working world;

- helping to develop a continuous process of guidance and counselling leading to "career choice";

- the basic development of a range of broad vocational skills;

- the development of personal and social skills, or qualities, such as self-confidence, initiative, cooperativeness, and communication skills.

These new objectives have resulted in a change in the methods by which young people learn, in the direction of :

- more active learning, so that students are using their minds, and their hands too, to carry out tasks, instead of passively receiving and memorising knowledge;

- the exploration, and use, of the "real" world outside the school, especially for experience of work, or for local studies or research projects, and for increasing contact between young people and adults in the community.

Most, though not all, parents welcome these changes of emphasis, and the consequent broadening of the objectives of secondary education. Others, perhaps because they are less familiar with these changes which have been in the air, and practiced on a limited scale for many years, find them surprising, or even inappropriate for their children. Whatever their view, it is absolutely clear that the shift implies the school taking a larger share in developing qualities, skills and understanding which are also fostered by the experience and environment of life in the family and, generally, outside the school. In other words, the area in which the school is pursuing objectives which are also part and parcel of the process of upbringing by parents, has

widened. It may be argued that, in reality, the change is not so dramatic, inasmuch as schools were always concerned with developing young people's social and personal qualities, and, that at their best, schools always saw this as a partnership between school and home. That may be so, for some schools, in some countries. But, generally speaking, these objectives are now receiving a much higher profile, and are likely to continue to do so in the future.

A second implication is that schooling, and the pupils' experiences at school are becoming less and less recognisable to parents. Learning is given emphasis over teaching. Teachers rely more on informality, and self-motivation, and less on an authoritarian approach and obedience. Learning takes place outside the school as well as inside it; in groups rather than in whole classes; supervised, rather than directed, by teachers.

All this means that it is essential that parents be encouraged and stimulated to grapple with these changes. Opportunities need to be created for parents to find out what the schools are doing for their children, and why. These implications are dealt with in Part II.

Choosing a career

It is equally of the greatest importance that parents find out what kind of procedure the school is using to help their child reach a decision about the choice of what to do, at the end of compulsory school. For all parents, and for all children, this is a most important moment of choice. Schools, in many countries, are spending much more time than they used to, in preparing young people for it, in all sorts of ways.

Perhaps the most common way is the the use of work experience placements, providing a short time in the world of work, to give young people first-hand experience of adult relationships at the work place, and the conditions, conflicts and rewards which adults associate with work. Another is the creation of simulated "mini-enterprises", in the school which can bring to life the reality of working together, to produce a product or a service, and to market it. There are many others. Summaries of relevant developments in the Transition Programme pilot projects can be found in issues in the Innovations series, as follows :

Career choice and the guidance process — Box 4

New developments in this area are summarised in Innovations on :

	Nr.
Work Experience and Guidance, Denmark	5
Guidance, Training and Coordination	6
Field Experience for Guidance Teachers - Greece	7
The "Youth Team"	8
Group-Work Guidance Materials - France	9
The School-Work Agency - Modena, Italy	15
The "RAA" - Germany	16
"COA" : School-Employment Centres	23
The "Why Not ...?" Course - Ireland	31
The "Girls' Programme" - Castlemilk, Glasgow	35

For the full list see Annex 1.

Action by parents associations

The development of a sense of partnership between teachers and parents, which is felt to be effective and satisfying on both sides, can only be achieved if three conditions are fulfilled :

- parents are reasonably well-informed about what the school is doing and sympathetic to it;

- opportunities are provided on the school's side for teachers and parents to have individual contact, in an appropriate way, to discuss the child's progress.

Parents' associations can do a lot to help parents become informed, confident and more articulate. The material on recent developments which has been referred to here is of course only a small part of what is available, in the different countries and regions of the Community, and to which parents' associations have access. It is their responsibility to :

- identify background material, on the development of secondary education, which would help parents to understand what schools are doing on their behalf;

- impress on the schools the need to provide parents with well-written clear and attractive publicity material, about the work of the school, its philosophy, organization, teaching style, etc.

- put pressure on the school to ensure that parents can take part in discussions, of an informal kind, with teachers, which will enable communication acceptable to both sides to develop, which will help individual parents and individual teachers in their contacts over individual children.

These are not the only tasks which parents' associations could fulfill. Other are identified in later parts of this paper, on the question of the use of parents, as members of the local community, in support of the school's need for contacts with, and resources in, the local community. Nor are they the only contributions which schools can make to partnership with parents. But they are an essential basic starting point, for good parent-school cooperation.

II - The role of schools

In most countries, good contacts between schools and parents are usually built up in the pre-primary and primary stages. But it is equally common that they weaken when the child moves up to secondary school. Contact is then often limited to one or two meetings a year with one or more of the child's teachers, to discuss a progress report usually in the form of a grade-mark, sometimes with a brief comment such as "could do better". Any other contact is likely to be for an emergency - a summons for the parent to come to school to discuss a problem, usually disciplinary.

So what should secondary schools do, to make parents into active partners, and to retain their active interest and involvement even when their child has moved on from primary school?

The two basic requirements are not to do with parents, but with the school's response to the needs of young people in its care, and with teachers' understanding of, and attitude to, the role of parents. They are that :

- first, the school's courses must motivate pupils and must appear both to them, and ideally to their parents too, as relevant to the real world. The school must also give <u>all</u> students the opportunity to succeed, and be proud of their work. When this happens, the pupils themselves will start to exert pressure on their parents to come into the school.

- Second, the school, as an institution, and its staff, must reflect an attitude that positively values and welcomes parental involvement. The staff must develop whatever techniques are necessary to communicate with parents, even if they are from different social or ethnic backgrounds. This is not easy, for many teachers brought up and trained in a totally opposite philosophy.

How the school and the individual teacher responds to these requirements has also to take account of three important further points.

- Young people's relationships with their parents are not always good, especially in adolescence. It has to be recognised that, for some of them, one of the attractions and strengths of school is that it is an alternative world to that of their parents. Children in this period are developing into adults, away from the authority of parents, and from dependence on them, towards companionship with others. Parents, on their side, often find this a difficult, trying, period, challenging to their status and authority, and testing their tolerance and patience to the limit.

- An increasing number of children are brought up in single-parent families, or with a parent who is either unmarried, divorced, or separated, or with adults who are not their parents. Schools trying to cooperate with these parents face many unfamiliar problems, connected to the complex relationships of such families. The same applies to parents associations.

- In many parts of the European Community, there are migrant or immigrant families who have language and cultural difficulties over and above all that has been said so far, in relation to communication and mutual understanding between themselves and the school and family.

Basically, these considerations reinforce the need for teacher and parent to be able to communicate, particularly if the school is trying to support the emergence of the young person into young-adulthood in ways which may not be known to, perhaps not even wholly accepted by, the child's parents. How these problems are resolved - and whether they can be resolved entirely - is beyond the scope of this paper. But it is necessary to recognise that these fundamental difficulties, and differences - between child and parent, parent and teacher, school and family, school and community - do enter into this field, and have to be countered and resolved as far as possible.

Schools need to project an image of wishing to create a partnership with parents. To do this, they should exploit local media, i.e. newspapers, radio and television, and of course opportunities offered by the parents' organization. The school needs to ensure that parents, and the local community, are given the information they need, to be able to understand the courses being provided in the school. In most countries, far too little attention is paid to projecting the work of the school, its image and its achievements to its "partners" be they individuals, groups, firms, businesses, schools or other bodies in the area or environment which it can identify as its "community".

"Community schools" are partly a solution. The community school idea is steadily gathering support in many places and influences many schools who are not themselves formally designated as community schools. Such schools, generate, and have the benefit of, informal contact with adults in the local community, or can do so much more easily than ordinary schools. Particularly for those which have other community services, such as recreation facilities, a library, or a play-group based in the same building-complex as the school, encouraging adults in the community to take an interest in its work is not difficult, making it that much easier to get parents, of all kinds, to come into the school to join in occasions which concern their own children. Community schools may even be offering courses in the school which these parents are following themselves, whether as part of adult education or recreation, during the day, in the evening or at weekends.

But many secondary schools are quite the opposite. They occupy large, forbidding, buildings, which seem to say "no parents admitted - except by appointment". Some do actually say it. Many are only open during school hours, which often does not include Saturdays, and this makes it difficult for working parents, or single parents, to come into school. It is fundamental, however, that all schools should project a welcoming and positive message - "parents welcome" - and arrange for parents to be able to make contact with the school outside normal school hours, and to ensure that such arrangements are made known to parents.

Practical arrangements inside the school need consideration. Where a school still uses whole-class teaching, interupting a class for the teacher to go out to meet parents is disruptive, and bringing the parents into the class-room may well upset the teacher. But secondary schools increasingly use informal, group and individual learning methods, with young people working largely on their own, and the teacher guiding and helping. In such situations, it is quite simple for the teacher to leave the class, to meet a parent; or parents can be received in the class-room where they can watch, and if necessary talk to, students without disrupting the class's work.

An interview room ? Box 5

The school could provide a comfortable interview room in which parents can be received. If a separate room cannot be made available, it is important that, at least, the way that parents are received should be as informal as possible. There should not for instance, be a desk for the teacher so that the parent is put in a subordinate role.

The ice should be broken, socially, by offering parents some kind of refreshment. If parents have to wait, the room in which they do so should perhaps display pupils' work in progress, so that they can pick up something of the atmosphere of the school.

However the practical facilities are arranged, the quality of the welcome which the school projects to parents depends mainly on the attitudes and behaviour of the people in the school with whom parents come into contact from the time that they enter it. This means not only the head-teacher and "management", and the teachers themselves, but also the school's secretary and caretakers.

It should be part of the professional training of teachers that they realise the need to require the skills of making parents, of all kinds, welcome in their school; that they need to take the trouble to find out about the world of the parents of their pupils, which may be very different from their own; and that they must be sensitive to, and respect, the parents' customs, and social conventions, where such differences are important. Help for teachers to do these things can come from various sources, particularly social occasions organized by the school's parents association, for informal contact.

So far we have discussed how to get the environment of the school right, how to create the right kind of climate of welcome, and what is expected of teachers. In this section we turn to the kinds of activities which schools should aim to provide to encourage parents to support their children during their secondary-school life.

First, meetings can be organized in the school where the young people can exhibit and demonstrate their work. Videos are a valuable medium for this, as well as an attraction. Where parents have video recorders, the videos can be copied so that they can take them home to look at them. Meetings of this kind can also be useful ways for teachers to make informal, social, contact with parents.

The power of the video — Box 6

A pilot project aimed at improving courses for low-achieving pupils in Somerset (United Kingdom) organized periods of residential experience, in the countryside, for groups of students, accompanied by teachers. Parents also accompanied these groups, to help generally and to provide their expertise. Many activities were laid on, including self-catering, caving, and orienteering. The pupils helped to make a video of these activities, along with the teachers and parents.

Later on, all the parents were invited to an informal evening, with refreshments, to see the video. Every one of them came. Copies of the video were made and lent to the parents.

The video show was regarded as a key factor in persuading parents, who had not normally attended school meetings, to come. Later they came to other meetings, once the ice had been broken in this way.

The pilot projects in Mannheim, Germany (D 5) and Hvidovre, Denmark (DK 4)* made videos describing the vocational training system, the social services, and the importance of education for young people, and lent them to the families of young migrants in the school community.

(Videos vary greatly in quality. Technical help perhaps available through a school project, may be needed to deal with problems.)

* The contact addresses of the Transition Programme pilot projects are at Annex 2.

Second, social occasions can be organized, either by the school or by the parents association. Their aim should be to offer something which is genuinely attractive to parents, whether it be a fair, a sports day or evening, or a social activity of some other kind. It should be something which the parents themselves have chosen, or helped to choose, and to which a good number of them are willing to contribute and take part in. These occasions are valuable for breaking down the barriers between teachers and parents, and helping to create a good climate, and to give the school the right image.

Third, the school should produce records of pupils' progress, based above all on their successes in and out of school, which will encourage parents to come and discuss their child's work. This may be either in an arranged interview, or informally in the course of the sort of activities just described.

Parents who stay away

Some parents will never have been in contact with the secondary school. Unpleasant memories of their own schooling, or the formal manner and language of teachers may intimidate them. Some immigrant parents will not be able to speak the host-country language. In some muslim families, women are hesitant about contacting the schools. All this means that there are a number of parents who will still not come to the school, even if the school has taken all the steps outlined so far. For them, special contact steps are needed.

Home visits, by someone capable of relating to the parents, are one approach. The right person may be a teacher who knows the young person best, or the class-teacher or a "tutor". Not all teachers are capable of home-visiting successfully, and not all are willing to undertake it. Some schools appoint a school-home liaison, or community, "tutor" to do it. This has the advantage that someone who is good at it can be

appointed, but the disadvantage that they will not know the pupil so well perhaps. For immigrant families with language difficulties, a liaison teacher who can speak the relevant languages is needed. In difficult cases, a social worker, in liaison with the class-teacher or tutor, may be the best person to make the first contact.

Home visits — Box 7

In a pilot project in Oxfordshire (United Kingdom) a new pupil-progress report, or record of achievement, was developed as part of the project's work for low-achieving pupils.

When the first of these reports was given to the pupils, the school's community tutor visited each parent to discuss it with them. After this, the parents came to the school for individual or group meetings.

In the Transition Programme pilot project in Mannheim (D 5) and Kreuzberg, Berlin (D 6) teachers visited muslim immigrant families, along with a native speaker from the immigrant community.

In Berlin, the mothers were encouraged to take recreational courses similar to those provided for their children, in art and music. This led to exhibitions of both their work. Afterwards, the parents accepted their daughters' participation in school activities more willingly, and took part in further education themselves, including learning to read and learning German. Visits were organized for them to other parts of Germany.

It may sometimes be possible for other parents, who live nearby, perhaps on the same housing-estate, to be recruited by the school or the parents association, to make contact with a family which is reluctant to visit the school. These intermediary parents may be able to persuade them to come to the school together, at least to a social event, and so establish some first contact.

Some schools in the pilot projects set up informal learning places, in disadvantaged areas of inner-cities, and one set up an evening "homework centre". These out-centres, or annexes of the school, located separately in the area, are of substantial help in attracting or contacting parents who are unwilling to come to the school itself, for

whatever reason. They may be particularly useful for persuading muslim women to make contact, and this is important as they may be very difficult to reach in other ways.

The 'Lieu a(p)prendre' Box 8

In the Venissieux pilot project (F 10) in a large disadvantaged housing estate on the outskirts of Lyon, France, an informal, after-school, neighbourhood centre was set up as a way of reinforcing students' learning in school. Its informal character enabled it to develop in many other ways as a meeting place between the school and the local community.

The centre was housed in part of the local community centre, in the heart of the area. Families of young people regularly came to it for various activities, apart from help with home-work. Parents were involved as helpers, or resource people, in the centre and found themselves valued in a new way, in that they were able to make a contribution to the school, and to other young people in their community. The informal contact which they had with the teachers was helpful to the latter in providing them with information and insight into the working of the local community.

See Innovations 11, "The Learning Place"-Vénissieux, France .

Involving parents in course choice

In the middle years of compulsory education, and subsequently, many countries' school systems introduce alternatives or options, from which pupils must choose their courses. The choices may be a matter of choosing a particular subject, or different levels of a subject, or alternative courses, or parts of a course. Parents need to be informed about these choices, and their implications, for a number of reasons discussed below.

Research shows that the most important influence on young people's decisions of this kind are their parents. However, in a rapidly changing world, most parents do not have the necessary information to give sound advice, without some help. Their perception of the world of work

outside their own field is often totally out-of-date and their knowledge of new careers, the new technology areas, for example, or of possible developments in the future, is probably very sketchy. For parents, therefore, it has become essential that they try to become more aware of current conditions, and that they accept that such decisions affecting their child should only be reached after discussion between the young person, the school/guidance staff, and, of course, themselves.

Clearly, the school's responsibilities begin with ensuring that the young people understand clearly what the options are, and their implications for their future careers or education. But in addition, the school must provide information to the parents at the same time as they give it to the pupils. This initial information will inevitably have to be written. But it is essential that it is clear, simple, and attractive - and preferably illustrated.

Thirdly, parents should be invited to the school for a meeting which should include a short presentation and (where courses are already running) a video about it. They should also have the opportunity of informal personal contact with staff, and with parents and young people on an existing or previous course. Parents associations can help organize this.

Finally, parents should be given the opportunity of a personal interview, with or without their child, with appropriate members of the school staff.

Publicising a new course — Box 10

Where a new course, a new approach, or a new subject element, is being introduced, the school should exploit its value as "news" in the local community. It may be possible for the school to project it, through the local media, i.e. radio, television or press.

The local parents association should obviously be informed, and helped to pass on information about it, through their newsletter or in other ways.

Schools in cities or towns may find it helpful to use an empty shop in a high street for publicity. Visual material can be shown in the window, including perhaps a video; and teachers, and perhaps parents too, can be present, at stated times, to answer questions.

The Northamptonshire pilot project (UK 30), also took special steps to inform and involve parents whose children were not very successful in conventional subject-learning in school.

When schools developed new courses, designed to motivate and help these pupils, an open meeting was held about the course, for parents and pupils, and individual meetings were offered with teachers.

Once the course was established, parents of pupils from current or previous courses were used to make direct contact with the parents of potential future pupils, at their home. Regular meetings were also held in the school, with displays of work, including video films, of the pupils' work on the course.

Parents were invited to take part in advisory groups, in each school, and in the local authority, about the content of the course and the methods used. About six parents took part in the school-level groups which met six times a year.

See also Innovations 17 : Involving parents - United Kingdom.

Involving parents in career choice

In some countries, it is a relatively new development for schools to be playing a larger role in careers guidance. Given the importance of parents' influence on their children's career decisions, special efforts are needed to ensure that they are as aware as possible of the alternatives which are realistically open to their child. Parents should be invited to careers meetings at the school, where they can be

informed of the procedure used by the school to help students' careers choice and can also be told about the local employment and training position. An approach to integrating such guidance discussion meetings with informing them about their child's curriculum, is described in Box 11 from Ludwigshafen, Germany.

Parents evenings and the guidance process — Box 11

A pilot project in Ludwigshafen, Germany, developed a new approach to help parents play their part in the guidance process.

In the child's sixth year (age 12), an information evening was held on 'Arbeitslehre' (Introduction to the world of work) which was in the curriculum for the 7th year; emphasis was placed on its careers education function.

In the seventh year, an evening was devoted to the important role of parents in vocational choice, and the need for cooperation between them and the school.

In the eighth year :

- a talk was provided on informal sources of guidance (the role of the local people, the peer group, friends, etc.) and the help available from specialist services;
- a talk was given on the role of work experience.

In the ninth year (age 15) :

- the various vocational training courses provided by vocational schools were described; and
- available jobs, and training places were discussed, together with how to help young people apply, prepare for an interview, etc.

This may seem a heavy load, for both parents and teachers or guidance specialists. But it illustrates clearly the areas in which cooperation can, and should, be established with parents by some means.

As the Ludwigshafen example illustrates, the school's role in helping young people, with their parents, consider and form career decisions should begin early on in the life of the pupil in secondary school, preferably as soon as he or she has settled down in the school. It should be treated as a central and regular part of the school's work, in relation both to pupils and to its local community. Some other examples of how pilot projects have interpreted this, in their particular situation, are given in Box 12.

Guidance — Box 12

The pilot project in Hvidovre, an urban part of Copenhagen (DK 4) set out to interest parents in its area about the need to improve equality of opportunity, for girls, in regard to choice of career and vocational training. The project developed a series of dramatic sketches, of typical situations, played by two teachers, using slides and music. This two-hour show was performed in three schools, four times in each, and about 500 adults attended. Afterwards there was a discussion of the issues illustrated, which was helped by the presence of guidance counsellors.

There was a great deal of lively discussion, and the project planned to transfer the drama on to video, so that it can be used more widely elsewhere.

The Rennes project (F 11) invited parents' representatives to their teacher-training workshop, together with the guidance counsellors, head-teachers and teachers, for whom it was mainly provided. Parents were also used as a resource, in activities aimed at helping young people think about their future employment, in the Manchester project (UK 27) and the Powys project in Wales (UK 29).

The St. Ghislain project in Belgium (B 1) set up joint working-groups of teachers and parents to consider, and make suggestions for common action, on problems faced by young people in the area, in their transition into employment.

III Parents as resources

This section describes how parents can be invited, encouraged or helped to contribute to the life and work of secondary schools, in their double role as parents of children in the school and as members of the local community. It has messages for parents' associations, as the means of communicating with parents and perhaps helping organize their support; for parents individually; and for schools who often do not see parents as partners in the ways described here.

The role of parents as a resource for secondary schools is fairly new. The idea of schools as enclosed, independent, institutions, who could manage the process of education without outside help, is giving way to a much more cooperative, outward looking, conception of the school, which stands in a reciprocal helping role with its local community, as a resource to strengthen it and as an institution which needs to draw on the community's resources. It needs to be emphasised strongly, if only to remove misunderstanding, that parents should not be seen just as a source of money, as they are in some countries particularly. Secondary schools, perhaps more than primary schools, have tended in the past to this view. As we shall see below, the resources which parents can offer stretch much wider than that.

Secondary schools these days offer many young people courses which make a lot of use of the world outside the school as a place for learning. The classroom is no longer the only learning place. Young people are encouraged to extend their experience of the world outside the school, in various ways.

The exploration of the world outside the school involves visiting firms, social services, and people in the local community. It may involve mini-research projects, about the local community, its history and environment. Young people develop the ability to communicate, to observe, to listen, and to question. They organize information, and have to present it.

At the same time, the school increasingly draws on "adults other than teachers", as resources inside the school, invited to contribute their knowledge, expertise or points of view.

New practical activites, not just workshop-based, but centred on practical questions of every-day life, appear increasingly commonly in the work of the school. Mini-enterprises, or simulations of industrial and business activities, are also increasingly common. Young people can plan, produce, and sell a product or a service, as part of them. All of this calls for expertise which the school may not necessarily possess, but which is almost certainly to be found outside the school in its local community.

Making contact

All secondary schools should have a clear view of how they project themselves to their local community, and therefore what are the best ways of communicating with it, and "selling" themselves to it. The question of how the parents, as resource people in their local community can be identified, contacted and invited to act as partners with the school, in one or more of the ways described below, falls naturally into that context.

The possible ways in which this kind of contact can be made include ;

- the media; the key annual, or special, events that the school organizes, which are likely to be of interest in the local community should be publicised to the local press, radio or television;

- meeting places; libraries, clubs, job centres, and informal notice boards can be useful;

- adult education network; the skills, interests and activities of adults in the local community can be tapped through contacts with those organizing adult education in the area;

- meetings; meetings of the parents' association, of year-groups of parents, etc.

- young people; messages can be channelled direct into the home through the young people themselves;

- school publicity; the school may well include in its own descriptive brochure invitations to parents to offer their services, or to contact the parents' association with offers.

Parents as a contact network with the outside world

Visits to, or placements for a short period in, a working situation is an increasingly common part of secondary education. The purpose is to give young people a chance to see, and to some extent take part in, an example of the world of work, as part of their introduction to it. Almost everywhere, schools find difficulty in locating enough firms or other bodies, for their pupils to visit or attend. Various organizations can help them on this, where local or national initiative has responded to the problem*.

Parents are an obvious way of finding these opportunities locally. They can provide contacts, entries to firms, advice and practical help for students when they are actually out on a placement. Many parents run small businesses. In large firms, they can help by encouraging management, trade unions and fellow workers to make work experience a success for young people. They can even act as unofficial feedback to the school about how to make work experience more successful. To do so, they will need to be well briefed as to what young people are expected to learn from work experience - which may be quite different from what they, the parents, expect.

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* For more about the use of work experience in secondary schools, and administrative help for schools to find placements, see two separate reports in this series; "The world of work as a learning resource", IFAPLAN, Brussels, December 1986; and "School-industry links", IFAPLAN, Brussels, July 1987.

Parents' associations should regard it as one of their major tasks that they find out what schools are doing in this area, identify what gaps their members might be asked to fill, and organize the necessary support, on a continuing basis, through their own network of contacts, advice, etc.

Practical, professional and technical knowledge

In vocational training schools, the staff are qualified as instructors in the particular vocational fields in which they offer courses. But, in compulsory education schools, providing general education, there are, increasingly, a range of practical activities which are designed to give young people some elementary basic knowledge in different practical fields, of a semi-vocational or pre-vocational nature. They may be involved in car or bicycle repairs, gardening, basic building operations, and so on.

More recently, schools are starting to introduce "enterprise education", i.e. business-based studies or projects, involving designing, producing and marketing. Again, teachers need the skills and expertise of adults in the community, on an occasional basis. "Adults other than teachers" are a key resource here - and those who do not have a contribution to make to the development and production of the work may well find themselves an important role as part of the "market".

These activities are not confined to the practical, and the business sectors. Schools frequently offer opportunities to young people to work in a pre-school, or a primary school, or a special school. One common activity is the organization of a creche or toddlers group in the school itself, where parents can act as instructors, and supervisors - as well as providing the young children perhaps.

A pilot project in Shannon (Ireland) developed a local area Talent Bank, or resource list of volunteers in the local community who were

available to help local schools in various ways :

- helping community-based learning (pupils learning outside the school, in the community);
- advising on mini-enterprises;
- contributing to pre-employment courses;
- helping pupils carry out field studies of local industry, agriculture;
- helping pupils prepare for interviews;
- contributing to week-end courses on entrepreneurship and small businesses;
- publishing a school-leavers' guide with emphasis on up-to-date information on career opportunities;
- organising seminars on future employment possibilities.

Adults as helpers

The school increasingly draws on adults in less "professional" roles. It needs their skills and knowledge, which may come simply from their being caring or concerned adults, capable of responsible supervision of young people in various contexts. For instance, schools now often organize periods of residential experience, where young people and adults live together in a centre, e.g. a field study centre, away from the school, and perhaps in the country. Students undertake a wide range of activities, discovering the local environment, orienteering, climbing, etc. Parents can provide skills and expertise, which not all the teachers will possess, as well as acting as supervisors.

As in every activity that involves parents in such roles, it is essential that they are well-briefed on the objectives of the school in providing this kind of experience. Often a major objective is to develop young people's self-confidence, so that they can plan, and carry out, their own activities without adult interference. Parents may have to be particularly careful of this. Similarly, where their own child is involved, they must be sure that the relationship between the two will not impair the pupil's experience.

Supervision by adults other than teachers can also help in schools' practical projects. Schools may contribute to "community services", e.g. helping establish or run some environmental service of a limited kind, or helping clear a local park, or improve it. Full-time supervision by teachers may be difficult, and adults, especially parents, can be asked to help.

Parents can be used as "guinea pigs". Where young people need practice in talking, answering questions, giving information, and so on. Parents can be used as listeners, or "clients". They are useful people, also, as the audience, for performances, either in the local community or as invited visitors into the school.

Parents as guinea pigs — Box 13

The pilot project in Castlemilk, Stathclyde (UK 28) involved secondary school parents as guinea pigs in a number of ways.

Schools were providing courses of "social and vocational preparation", part of which was a course on First Aid and another on home-making.

Students who had finished the First Aid course, invited their parents in for tea at the end of the school day, and gave them a demonstration of First Aid. Other were invited into the flat, which is built into the school for learning purposes, and entertained them as part of their home-making course.

Parents who would normally stay away from the school, came to these occasions, and enjoyed them.

Local knowledge

Local studies, exploring the history, culture, geography and economy of the local area, are a regular part of secondary education in many countries. "Ask your parents ..." is a natural way for teachers to prompt their students to find out about these things, like gathering their family's experience directly. Grand-parents may be just as interesting, and informative, as well as more willing to talk. Pilot projects as far apart as Scotland (UK 28), Quercy (France, part of the F 11 project) and Sassari in Sardinia (I 19b), all involved their pupils in interviewing parents or grand-parents in this way. The Treviso project (I 21a) gathered local material and published it in several volumes.

Local knowledge — Box 14

In the pilot project in Galway, Ireland (IRL 17) a series of new courses for students between 14 and 18 were developed, and part of the teaching material suggested that young people should involve their families in their learning.

As part of the technology course, an electricity module calls for parents to supervise and certify the use by their children of various home appliances. Parents were also called on to explain the electrical wiring system in the house, with the help of some material provided by the school.

Careers advice, and careers information

No scheme for providing young people with work experience will give them more than a limited glimpse of what jobs are like, in their area. Apart from the time constraints, work itself has become, in many cases, inaccessible or difficult to experience in such a brief contact. Schools have various ways of trying to remedy this, and to deal with the problem of giving young people the feel of a career. The possibility of using parents, coming into the school to talk, for this purpose is generally overlooked.

Parents' associations, acting together between schools perhaps, should be able to organize a network of parents who are prepared to receive young people at home, or at the week-end, to talk to them individually about their jobs or professions. Such parents can also contribute to guidance evenings, or the school guidance procedure, or even be asked to give a careers information talk.

Placements with parents — Box 15

The pilot project in Treviso, Italy (I 21a) used parents as a source of placements for young people to experience work.

The students were in post-compulsory (ages 16-18) agricultural courses, and spent one week in three in practical experience on farms, 13 weeks altogether on their one-year course.

These placements were provided on the farms of parents of present and past students at the school. The teachers visited these farms regularly, with advice to the owners on the kind of experience which they would like the students to be provided with, and also provided technical advice to the farmers on their farming.

Naturally, the students were never placed on their own parents' farm.

Problems Box 16

Using adults other than teachers as resources, and parents particularly, can pose problems which are best known about in advance.

Many parents are not experienced in handling young people other than their own children, and have little idea about how to set about giving them information or advice. The school should be willing, perhaps in conjunction with the parents' association, to provide some "training" to help parents do their job, as a resource person, more effectively, and to enable them to learn from their experience. Such "training" will need to deal with the style of authority relationships which the school favours, and the learning methods which it uses. In some countries, trade unions provide similar induction courses before their members are invited into schools.

Teachers, also, are often unused to working alongside "non-professionals" and may be reluctant to recognise that they have a contribution to make. Some element of "training" on their side may be needed too.

Legal regulations may also need to be examined, or changed, to permit the involvement of parents.

Insurance, both of young people, and of helping adults/parents must be taken out where it is not already provided.

Conclusions*

This section summarises the points on which action can be initiated by parents or parents associations and by schools, as set out in the preceding sections; and draws the implications for supporting action by local authorities responsible for education.

Parents' associations

The implications of developing a partnership between school and parents mean that parents associaitons need to consider all or most of the following :

- informing all parents about the role and activities of the association in support of the school, and sponsoring social/informal occasions to help in this;

- involving as many parents as possible in the activities of the association, so as to identify and reflect the interests, concerns, and needs of different groups and individuals in the schools community;

- assisting the school prepare and publish material about the school, its community, guidance processes, labour market, etc. including the pproduction of videos to be lent to parents, if necessary in several languages;

- assisting the school in identifying opportunity-providers, resource groups and persons in the local community;

* the attribution of responsibilites implied in this section will vary according to the national system and practice.

- establishing friendly working relations with the local education authorities, employment services, and local media;

- assisting the school/parents by finding and making available material about secondary education, or careers, likely to be helpful to parents in their role as partners with the school.

Schools

The principal points outlined in Chapter II where that schools should:

- ensure that, as part of their school-based self-review processes, their courses are relevant and motivating to pupils of all kinds in the school, and give all students an opportunity to succeed and be proud of their work;

- reflect an attitude that positively values and welcomes parental involvement;

- check that published material on the objectives and education provided by the school is well-described, in an accessible language and style, in publications available to parents;

- check that the physical arrangements, at the entrance to the school, project a welcoming, and not a hostile, image to parents coming to school; and that the entrances are clearly marked;

- ensure that reception arrangements for visitors are friendly, informal and understood by all those concerned;

- ensure that teachers are informed about how to receive parents, in their class or elsewhere, at times which are convenient to parents.

To encourage parents to support their children during their secondary school period, schools should :

- arrange meetings where the young people can exhibit and demonstrate their work;

- consider producing videos, or enabling pupils to produce them, so that parents can take them home, or they can be used for demonstration in the school, at parents' meetings;

- encourage the organization of social occasions, by the parents' association or teachers, to create a cooperative climate, between teachers and parents, in the school;

- ensure that informative records are produced of pupils' progress based on their achievements both in and out of school, as a basis for discussion with parents about their child's work.

To help parents who are reluctant to visit the school, schools should consider :

- home-visits, by appropriate teachers or other staff;

- special informal occasions, coupled with whatever help or encouragement may be though appropriate to overcome the reluctance of some parents to visit the school;

- consider the establishment of an informal, off-premises, centre for contact with the local community.

For helping parents in the process of assisting their child's choice of career or future courses, the school should ;

- ensure that the material available for parents is clear, comprehensive and simply expressed;

- provide opportunities for parents to learn about the choices open to their child, in other ways than through printed material, if at all possible;

- arrange meetings for parents to have informal personal contact with staff, and with parents and young people from an existing or previous course, if possible;

- arrange opportunities for individual personal interviews, with or without their child, for each parent with a member of school staff;

- consider using local newspapers, radio and television, to advertise new courses, in a way which will bring them to the attention of parents, and also employers and others.

Schools should also consider whether they are doing enough to encourage girls to choose courses and careers outside the traditionally female-dominated sectors.

Parents as resources

Schools should consider developing the involvement of "adults other than teachers" in the learning/teaching process; for this purpose they should :

- identify and contact possible resources/resource people, using publicity in the local media, libraries, the adult education network, parents associations meetings, and school publicity;

- develop a school resource network or "talent bank", of such resources, make it available to teachers and update it as necesary;

- involve parents in the organisation/execution of work experience schemes, and enterprise education, especially those with industrial, business or professional skills;

- involve other parents as helpers, and in caring/supervising roles, e.g. for residential experience, community service, sports activities, etc.

- involve parents as guinea pigs, audiences, "markets" for young people's end-of-course events, etc.

- draw on parents' local knowledge and culture as resources for learning/teaching;

- involve parents as resources in the careers information and guidance process.

Local education authorities

The implications for action at the local authority level, which flow from these proposals, are as follows.

Local authorities should consider action under the following headings :

- legal; legal restrictions on access by parents to schools, and their participation in the work of the schools, may need to be reviewed and removed;

- insurance cover for parents' involvement in school activities may have to be provided;

- finance; resources should be made available on a small scale, to help schools create video films for parents' meetings, publish appropriate information material to parents about the school and about careers/course choices, etc.

- resources may be needed to enable schools to create a parents' "interview room", from existing accomodation, e.g. to furnish it;

- training; training should be organized for teachers to help them develop skills and attitudes needed to welcome and promote the cooperation of parents as partners in the education process, in secondary school and especially in the transition years;

- administrators and inspectors, employed by the authority, should similarly be encouraged with training to adopt a positive attitude to parental involvement;

- special attention should be given to the training needs of headteachers at schools where they play a particularly influential part;

- non-teaching staff, i.e. school secretaries, caretakers, etc. should also be included in training, in view of the importance of their roles in contacts with parents and in encouraging their cooperation with the school.

In regard to parents and parents' associations, the authorities or schools should also consider :

- training; the need for special in-service courses for parent representatives on decision-making bodies, perhaps in conjunction with the parents' association;

- participation; the need to try to ensure the participation of representatives from all social classes and cultures on all parent bodies concerned with schools;

- finance; support for the parents' associations, to enable them to play an active part in spreading information, encouraging participation, and changing attitudes.

Innovations

Innovations, a series of four-page profiles of new developments on curriculum, guidance, aspects of cooperation, provision for the disadvantaged, teacher training, and the improvement of opportunities for girls. Each profile summarises a significant development, innovation or project relevant to the needs of young people in their transition years (ages 14-18) and is available in all the nine official languages of the European Community.

The series is continuing. The list here shows the titles to be available at the end of 1987.

Innovations are included in this paper, for their suitability as illustrations of new developments in education for young people in secondary education, in European Community countries; and because they may provide useful starting points for discussion for meetings of parents and parents' associations, with schools, and teachers.

Nr. 1/1987 "ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT"
A one-year course in 4 sections designed for 15-18 year olds in secondary school to develop creativity, resourcefulness, and entrepreneurial skills. Prepared in Galway, Ireland, by PIPE - the Pilot Project for the Integrated Provision of Education, in 1986.

Nr. 2/1987 SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LINKING - GREECE
As part of the development of the "Integrated Lykeio" (unified upper-secondary school, for pupils aged 16-18) a variety of extra-curricular school-community linking activities have been developed in several schools in Greece, since 1985. The activities build on the resources of the school and social and economic needs/opportunities in the local community, and contribute to the curriculum, guidance and community education.

Nr. 3/1987 WORK EXPERIENCE INTEGRATED IN THE CURRICULUM - IRELAND
Schools in a Transition Programme pilot project in Shannon, Ireland, have developed a group of alternative 16-18 programmes to lead to new upper-secondary Senior National Certificates. Work experience of various kinds is an integral part of them. Assignments, work-books, and visit-sheets are used to link various kinds of experience of work to the subjects which the students are studying.

Nr. 4/1987 SCHOOL COOPERATIVES - ITALY
Cooperatives set up in schools by young people are being increasingly used in Italian 'Scuola media' (middle schools, i. e. pupils aged 11-14). They are seen as a contribution to vocational guidance (especially in non-industrialised areas) by strengthening the schools' links with the local community; to developing students' ability to work in groups; and as a form of practical "education for enterprise".

Nr. 5/1987 WORK EXPERIENCE AND GUIDANCE - DENMARK
The Aalborg (Denmark) City Education Authorities adopted, in 1985, a phased scheme for the use of work experience placements, for all pupils in the 8th, 9th and 10th years of Folkeskole (ages 14-16). The scheme is seen as an important part of the guidance function of the schools, and supporting a gradual transition from school into further training, education or work.

Nr. 6/19897 GUIDANCE TRAINING AND COORDINATION
In order to meet better the special needs of young people arising from youth unemployment and the consequent diversification of training schemes, guidance is now being offered in several 'Länder' (States), not only in the traditional way by vocational counsellors from the Manpower Services, but also by cooperation between them and school-teachers. The training provided for them, and the process of cooperation between the two services, are described here.

Nr. 7/1987 FIELD EXPERIENCE FOR GUIDANCE TEACHERS - Greece
"Fifth-month training" is an approach, used in Greece, to putting specialist guidance teachers from secondary schools in touch with industry and the community in their region. It forms the last part of a national 5-month training course provided for 450 selected guidance teachers in all areas of the country since 1983. It was developed as a Pilot Project in the European Transition Action Programme.

Nr. 8/1987 THE "YOUTH TEAM"
The Youth Team in Hvidovre (Copenhagen, Denmark) is a way of coordinating and developing services and education/training provision for young people aged 16+ in an inner suburb of the city. The Youth Team is drawn from the various services whose job it is to help young people. It is strongly client-centred, and enables young people to access the whole range of product services designed for them, through contact with a single person.

Nr. 9/1987 GROUP-WORK GUIDANCE MATERIALS - FRANCE
These materials are for guidance work in groups. They are designed to help teachers cope with young people's educational, social and vocational problems. They can be used flexibly, to meet needs as they arise, and they are for use jointly by guidance counsellors and teachers. There are four parts; an introductory unit and 3 covering self-awareness, knowledge of the world of work, and planning one's future.

Nr. 10/1987 ENTERPRISE EDUCATION IN A SPECIAL SCHOOL
A Northern Ireland secondary school for pupils with learning difficulties introduced an "enterprise education" project, to promote initiative, independence and self-confidence in the girls in its final year, aged 15-16. The project was part of an 8-point curriculum development plan, adopted and implemented by the school, with limited outside support, in 1984/5.

Nr. 11/1987 THE "LEARNING PLACE" - VENISSIEUX, FRANCE
The 'Lieu a(p)prendre' ("Learning-place", "Place for you to take over") is an informal, after-school, neighbourhood centre set up in 1984 in a disadvantaged area in Vénissieux, a post-war suburb of Lyon. The centre's original aim was to reinforce students' learning in school. Its informal character has enabled it to develop in many other ways as a meeting-place between the school and the local community.

Nr. 12/1987 YOUTH AND CULTURE CENTRE - BERLIN
The 'Jugend- und Kulturzentrum' (Youth and Culture Centre) enables whole classes from schools in the inner-city Kreuzberg neighbourhood of Berlin to spend a week on various kinds of art activities. Similar in some ways to "residential experience" (but not residential) the Centre uses painting, music, theatre, etc to stimulate young people's self-confidence, to give them a taste of success and to cope better with some of the socio-economic disadvantage from which they suffer.

Nr. 13/1987 THE "MISSIONS LOCALES": LOCAL TASK FORCES
The 'Missions locales' (local task-forces) are a network of local bodies set up all over France since 1982 to coordinate, stimulate and develop education, training and other provision for young people, especially those 'en difficulté' between the age of 16 and 25.

Nr. 14/1987 THE SCHOOL CONTACT COMMITTEE - AALBORG, DENMARK
The need for an effective linking structure between school and the world of work was met by the city of Aalborg (Denmark) in 1977 by the creation of a "School Contact Committee for Educational and Vocational Guidance". It is an informal body, for cooperation and action on any aspect of school-trade/industry contact, working through the existing agencies, especially guidance-counsellors.

Nr. 15/1987 SCHOOL-WORK AGENCY - MODENA, ITALY
The Modena "Agenzia Scuola-Mondo del Lavoro" (School-World of Work Agency) is one of several school-industry linking agencies set up in pilot projects in the second European Transition action Programme. The Agenzia offers services and help to teachers in lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools, especially technical/commercial ones. It has created a youth cooperative as part of its support for entrepreneurial education.

Nr. 16/1987 THE "RAA" - GERMANY
Identifying and providing for the special guidance needs of young immigrants, has been the main function of the local Guidance Agencies for Migrants (Regionale Arbeitsstellen zur Förderung ausländischer Kinder und Jugendlicher (RAA)) which have been working in cities in Northrhine-Westphalia (Germany) since 1980. The agencies have also developed forms of community education for the same objective.

Nr. 17/1987 INVOLVING PARENTS - UNITED KINGDOM
One of the aims of the Transition Programme pilot project secondary schools in Northamptonshire (UK) was to associate parents more actively in the education of their children, especially the parents of lower-achieving pupils. The schools developed ways to create a new climate; to provide new kinds of parent evenings; to bring parents into advisory groups; and to involve them actively in curriculum activities.

Nr. 18/1987 CLASS-ROOMS FOR ACTIVE LEARNING - MANCHESTER
In Manchester, the Transition Programme pilot project, on developing alternative curricula and active learning methods, also developed a model of the physical organization of the class-room which would be suited to the changed type of pupil activity and the change in the role of the teachers and pupil-teacher relationships. Such rooms were called "multi-skills bases" and are described here.

Nr. 19/1987 THE OUTREACH PROGRAMMES - DUBLIN
In the Outreach Centre, run by the Dublin Inner City Project, a new approach has been developed to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people. Community-based, second-chance programmes, are provided with social and vocational preparation, to help them acquire independence and motivation.

Nr. 20/1987 OUTREACH YOUTH CENTRES - LUXEMBURG
Those in charge of training programmes for drop-outs from secondary school face the task of finding and contacting their clients, and developing their confidence and motivation sufficiently to want to take part in training. The approach adopted in the Luxemburg Transition Programme pilot project was to establish neighbourhood based outreach centres, staffed by specially-trained young social workers, acting on behalf of, and with the support of, the training, guidance, etc. services.

Nr. 21/1987 SOCIAL & VOCATIONAL SKILLS COURSE - STRATHCLYDE
A two-year course has been developed in comprehensive schools in Scotland as part of a Transition curriculum for students age 14-16, to develop their social and vocational skills. The course is cross-curricular, based on three themes (home, community and work) and uses experience-based learning. Intended learning outcomes are defined, and assessed as part of the new Scottish Standard Grade Examination at age 16.

Nr. 22/1987 WORK EXPERIENCE FOR TEACHERS - ZEELAND
The Zeeland Work Experience for Teachers Scheme provides short work experience opportunities for teachers from vocational schools (pupils aged 12-19) and guidance teachers in general education schools. The scheme is now being spread to all parts of the Netherlands.

Nr. 23/1987 "COA" : SCHOOL-EMPLOYMENT CENTRES
A 'Contactcentrum Onderwijs Arbeid' (COA) or School-Employment Liaison Centre, has been set up since 1982 in each of the 12 Dutch provinces. They are an important part of the government's efforts to bridge the gap between school and the world of work. Their main fields of activity are : information; the coordination of guidance; and the improvement of work experience schemes.

Nr. 24/1987 SCHOOL, COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT, UNITED KINGDOM
Secondary schools serving scattered village communities are a major potential resource for them. The Northamptonshire pilot project developed ways to enable students to learn by working in the community alongside adults, and at the same time strenthen the schools' contribution to their local communities and their environment.

Nr. 25/1987 SCHOOL AND 'TERRITORIO' - REGGIO CALABRIA
The development of schools' links with their 'territorio' (local area) has been the main strategy used in the European Community's Transition Programme pilot project in the south Italian province of Reggio Calabria. 'Territorio' studies contribute to many subjects, as well as enriching personal and social education and guidance; stimulating enterprise education; and emphasising the role of the schools in their local community.

Nr. 26/1987 GUIDANCE COURSE - THE NETHERLANDS
The Transition Programme pilot project in Rotterdam (Netherlands) developed a 12-week "Introduction to the world of work" course to give students in secondary education (between the ages 14 & 18) a broad understanding of the world of work and help them make career choices. The course includes a one-week work experience placement and calls for the pupils' subject teachers to contribute to its preparation and follow-up stages.

Nr. 27/1987 CURRICULUM COORDINATORS - MANCHESTER
Between 1983 and 1987, the Manchester Education Authority (United Kingdom), as part of a pilot project in the second European Transition Programme, provided an additional member of staff in seven secondary schools to coordinate curriculum development and other in-school activities for new approaches to teaching and learning for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. The coordinators' role was a key factor in the success of the project.

Nr. 28/1987 "WRITING TEAMS" - MANCHESTER
The Alternative Curriculum Strategies (ACS) Transition Programme pilot project in Manchester used "writing team" weekends as a device to crystallise the experience of their project schools on selected themes. The meetings produced teaching materials for use in staff development activities. The procedure solved a problem felt by many projects, namely how to identify the key factors for success in an innovation, and express and record them in a form in which they can be transmitted to a wider audience.

Nr. 29/1987 TRAINING FOR LOCAL NEEDS - BELGIUM
Established to develop new sandwich-type courses for low-qualified young unemployed school-leavers, a pilot project in the 2 Provinces of Limburg and West Flanders has pioneered new methods of course-marketing and cooperation between vocational training and firms ; and trained/re-trained nearly 600 students in four years, on tailor-made courses.

Nr. 30/1987 SCHOOL-LINKING, BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG
Since 1982, all Baden-Württemberg 'Hauptschulen' (secondary schools providing the shortest type of lower-secondary education, for 10-15 year olds) have been linked with their local post-15 vocational schools, through a system of Contact Teachers working together in Contact Groups ('Kontaktkreise'). The system, has also led to greater curriculum continuity, and cooperation in guidance, between the two types of schools, and been of help for curriculum development and teacher training.

Nr. 31/1987 THE "WHY NOT ...?" COURSE - IRELAND
"Why not broaden your horizons?" - a teacher's resource pack has been developed in a European Community Transition Programme pilot project in Shannon, Ireland, to introduce girls in secondary schools (aged 11 to 16) to a wider range of occupations and to encourage them to look beyond familiar stereotypes, in choosing education, training and careers.

Nr. 32/1987 TURKISH GIRLS CENTRE - BERLIN

(in preparation)

Nr. 33/1987 WIDENING GIRL'S OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE - FRANCE

(in preparation)

Nr. 34/1987 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME - MANCHESTER
In 1980, Manchester began to set up a city-wide network and programme to promote and support gender equality activities in schools, colleges and the city's education administration. The aim is to increase and maintain commitment at all levels. Schools in the European Transition Programme pilot project in Manchester have played an active part in it.

Nr. 35/1987 THE "GIRLS' PROGRAMME" - CASTLEMILK, GLASGOW
The "Girls Programme" developed in the Castlemilk (Glasgow, United Kingdom) European Transition Programme pilot project is a 4 x 1-hour course designed to raise the awareness of 14/15 year-old girls to sex-stereotyping and its effects on women's choice of jobs and training.

Nr. 36/1987 WORK EXPLORATION CENTRE - DUBLIN, IRELAND
The Dublin Work Exploration Centre was developed to support curriculum initiatives in a group of inner-city schools aimed at developing young people's social and vocational skills, through practical learning. The Centre also reached young people in youth clubs, community groups and out-of-school education programmes. Various facilities and organized programmes are available, by day and in the evening.

Nr. 37/1987 SCHOOLS, FIRMS & TRADE UNIONS
Schools are increasingly urged to develop links with business/industry. Such collaboration needs to be two-way. Examples are given of how trade unions and firms can develop programmes of activities to bridge the gap with the school system from their side.

Nr. 38/1987 'ARBEITSLEHRE' - GERMANY
Started in the 1960s, 'Arbeitslehre' (Teaching about the world of work) is now included in the curriculum of the majority of pupils in Germany and usually includes some form of work experience. There is pressure to make it obligatory for all. A network of local school-industry groups help teacher s provide it.

Nr. 39/1987 SCHOOLS, INDUSTRY & CURRICULUM - UNITED KINGDOM
For many schools closing the gap between school and the world of work means giving an industrial dimension to the curriculum. Various methods of doing this can be seen. The cross-curriculum approach, in which teachers in several subjects collaborate for this purpose, is described here.

List of contacts for Transition pilot projects referred to in the text

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Innovations

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
ACTION PROGRAMME

TRANSITION OF
YOUNG PEOPLE
FROM EDUCATION
TO ADULT AND WORKING LIFE

17 ___ '87
INVOLVING PARENTS – UNITED KINGDOM

PROGRAMME INFORMATION OFFICE
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One of the aims of the Transition Programme pilot project secondary schools in Northamptonshire (UK) was to associate parents more actively in the education of their children, especially the parents of lower-achieving pupils. The schools developed ways to create a new climate; to provide new kinds of parent evenings; to bring parents into advisory groups; and to involve them actively in curriculum activities.

Context

The Northamptonshire pilot project in the second European Community Programme on the Transition of young people from education to adult and working life, comprised a group of rural and urban comprehensive secondary schools (pupils aged 11-18). The rural schools often received pupils from villages several miles away. Many children were from one-parent families. Some worked a lot in their parents' shops.

The project concentrated on developing alternative curricula suitable for students who were unlikely to achieve substantial success on existing courses and examinations. In support of this objective, it aimed to develop a partnership between home and school by:

- persuading parents that they had a contribution to make in the education of their children;

Mother at Queen Elizabeth School, Northamptonshire

- encouraging parents to show their support for their children by attending school functions;
- giving parents opportunities to make a real contribution to the school curriculum and the education of their children; and
- encouraging parents to support the school actively by participating in classroom activities.

Creating the climate

The schools set out to offer parents open access both to the school and to the education of their children.

- schools produced easily readable material to explain to parents why they were being asked to visit the school. Many of the parents had found school an alien place when they were young, and some had only been invited to school when there were problems with their children;
- parents were invited to visit the school as part of a group;
- all parents were given the opportunity of being involved in joint school-community advisory groups (see below);
- schools set out to identify parental skills, and find ways to use them in the classroom.
- they created attractive, informal reception areas where parents could wait, in the school, before meeting the staff.
- when coming to the school to a meeting, alone or in groups, parents were offered a cup of tea/coffee, to "break the ice"; this was extremely important for parents who already felt threatened by coming into the school.
- the project classrooms were adapted to include informal carpeted areas with easy chairs, for informal learning and to receive the parents. The impact on the parents was considerable, the classrooms being very different from those of their own schooling.

Parent evenings

Many of the parents of the project children had never attended an official school-parents evening. Often their children did not deliver the invitation. When parents had attended, they had probably received negative and depressing reports of their children's lack of academic attainment. The children themselves were seldom present.

The project's new-style evenings were informal:

- both parents and children were invited. Children were actively involved in persuading their parents to attend;
- light refreshments were served in the school's project "base" (adapted class-room);
- every child had work displayed in and around the room;
- a video-film of the youngsters at work and in the community was shown, and proved very popular with the parents;
- computer terminals were available for children to show their parents how to use them;
- teachers were present, to be approached if the parents wished. Usually the young people were anxious for their parents to approach some of the teachers.

90% attendance was not uncommon. Many of the parents visited the school for the first time.

Parents in advisory groups

The local authority set up advisory groups to monitor progress and support the pilot project's work in the schools. These brought together various agencies, including parents of project pupils. Each group met 6 times a year, and the parental voice gained more power in the debate about the education of their children. Parents were involved in the discussion of the questions to be examined by the independent evaluation of the project.

At school level, there were school project advisory groups, and each of these usually included 3 or 4 parents.

In these groups parents :

- helped to organise supervision of community placements, freeing teaching staff to visit them on a rota basis;
- became involved in observing a school's link with its local college of further education;
- joined with bankers, industrialists, trade unionists, students and teachers, in planning an enterprise activity for a project's group of young people.

Parents and curriculum activities

Project schools identified parents with specialist skills. This was done through their own newsletters, or by consulting the lists of adults attending local evening classes.

Examples of parents contributing to curriculum activity included :

- a parent leading a group of students and teachers on a week's residential experience of hill-walking. The parent was undoubtedly the leader of the expedition, and the teacher colleagues played a supportive role.

- parents offered their skills and interests, in the classroom; they became involved in knitting, jewelry-making, brick-laying, farming and forestry.

- parents became involved in introductory meetings for other, new, parents, explaining the new curriculum to them, and helping them to decide whether or not their children should take part in it.

Check-list for success

1. Make certain that the initial publicity about the school's work is comprehensive, and that it reaches the parents that it is intended for.

2. Create an informal atmosphere to break down the barriers which often exist in the minds of parents when they come into the school.

3. Let parents feel involved at a parents' evening by having displays of work, videos, computers, etc.

4. Find ways of involving parents in an active way in the life of the school, using their personal specialist skills, and involving them in an active and valid way.

Further information

Reference papers by the pilot project, on the formation of parents advisory groups (in English only).

Project Newsletters on the approach and implementation of the project's work in schools.

Pamphlets for parents of ethnic minority communities, on the education system, individual schools and curriculum : in various languages (eg. Gujerati, Hindi).

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